

Car Seat Safety

The Wilmington Fire Department works closely with the New Hanover County SAFE KIDS Coalition. Several fire fighters are Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. If you would like to learn how to safely install your child's car seat call one of the city's two permanent car seat checking stations and make an appointment with a technician.

Fire Headquarters
801 Market Street
Wilmington, NC
910-341-7846

Fire Station #9 at Landfall
1201 Military Cutoff Road
Wilmington, NC
910-341-7846

Beginning with the first ride your baby takes in the car, it is important that he be placed in a rear-facing car seat that is properly secured in the back seat. This is the safest location in the car for travel. Your baby depends on you. Give him the gift of safety.

- **Before your baby is born**, purchase a car safety seat that fits securely into your car, and is convenient to operate. Your baby needs to be well-protected right from the start. It is critical that the restraint be not only well-secured with a seat belt, but that your child is securely buckled in.
- **In the early weeks**, when your baby might not have good head control, it is helpful to use a head support intended for car seat use, or roll up a baby blanket to place around your baby's head to steady it. Otherwise, his head has a tendency to flop from side to side.
- **Never place your infant in the front passenger seat.** This is especially important if your car has a passenger-side air bag. If the air bag deploys in the event of a crash, the force and rapid expansion could kill or injure a child, even when they are safely secured in their car seat.
- **If your baby is sick or needs constant attention**, it is important to have an adult sit in the back to help care for him. It can be very distracting (and dangerous) for the driver to keep turning around to care for the baby.
- **The rear-facing position is the most protective.** It is important not to move your child into a full-size safety seat too soon. Your baby should weigh at least 20 pounds AND be one-year-old. If your child is very large, but still well under a year of age, it is still very important for him to be placed in a rear-facing seat while riding in the car. Some rear-facing car seats have an upper weight limit from 22 to 25 pounds. Some of the newer seats accommodate children up to 30 pounds or even more. Each seat should have a fact sheet so read carefully before selecting a car seat for your child.